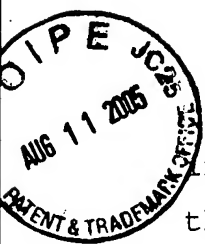


ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE



A pulse width control circuit provided in a drive circuit instructs an OFF drive circuit to operate for a period shorter than an inactive period of a drive control signal. Thus, when the drive control signal is inactive, the OFF drive circuit begins operating, and draws a current from a base of a switching element, thereby turning OFF the switching element. Further, the OFF drive circuit stops operating before the drive control signal becomes active.